# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/30/21

# Holiness or Hardness Toward God?



He…wondered that there was no intercessor… —[Isaiah 59:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Isaiah+59%3A16)

The reason many of us stop praying and become hard toward God is that we only have an emotional interest in prayer. It sounds good to say that we pray, and we read books on prayer which tell us that prayer is beneficial— that our minds are quieted and our souls are uplifted when we pray. But Isaiah implied in this verse that God is amazed at such thoughts about prayer.

Worship and intercession must go together; one is impossible without the other. Intercession means raising ourselves up to the point of getting the mind of Christ regarding the person for whom we are praying (see [Philippians 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:5)). Instead of worshiping God, we recite speeches to God about how prayer is supposed to work. Are we worshiping God or disputing Him when we say, “But God, I just don’t see how you are going to do this”? This is a sure sign that we are not worshiping. When we lose sight of God, we become hard and dogmatic. We throw our petitions at His throne and dictate to Him what we want Him to do. We don’t worship God, nor do we seek to conform our minds to the mind of Christ. And if we are hard toward God, we will become hard toward other people.

Are we worshiping God in a way that will raise us up to where we can take hold of Him, having such intimate contact with Him that we know His mind about the ones for whom we pray? Are we living in a holy relationship with God, or have we become hard and dogmatic?

Do you find yourself thinking that there is no one interceding properly? Then be that person yourself. Be a person who worships God and lives in a holy relationship with Him. Get involved in the real work of intercession, remembering that it truly is work— work that demands all your energy, but work which has no hidden pitfalls. Preaching the gospel has its share of pitfalls, but intercessory prayer has none whatsoever.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Wherever the providence of God may dump us down, in a slum, in a shop, in the desert, we have to labour along the line of His direction. Never allow this thought—“I am of no use where I am,” because you certainly can be of no use where you are not! Wherever He has engineered your circumstances, pray. So Send I You, 1325 L

# CCEL – 3/30/21

**Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.**—[GEN. 24:63.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.24.html" \l "Gen.24.63)

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?—The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.—This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night.—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. 19:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.19.html" \l "Ps.19.14).[Psa. 8:3,4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.8.html" \l "Ps.8.3). -[Psa. 111:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.111.html" \l "Ps.111.2).[Psa. 1:1,2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.1.html" \l "Ps.1.1). -[Josh. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Josh.1.html" \l "Josh.1.8). -[Psa. 63:5,6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.63.html" \l "Ps.63.5).

“He was numbered with the transgressors.” [Isaiah 53:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.12)

Why did Jesus suffer himself to be enrolled amongst sinners? This wonderful condescension was justified by many powerful reasons. In such a character he could the better become their advocate. In some trials there is an identification of the counsellor with the client, nor can they be looked upon in the eye of the law as apart from one another. Now, when the sinner is brought to the bar, Jesus appears there himself. He stands to answer the accusation. He points to his side, his hands, his feet, and challenges Justice to bring anything against the sinners whom he represents; he pleads his blood, and pleads so triumphantly, being numbered with them and having a part with them, that the Judge proclaims, “Let them go their way; deliver them from going down into the pit, for he hath found a ransom.” Our Lord Jesus was numbered with the transgressors in order that they might feel their hearts drawn towards him. Who can be afraid of one who is written in the same list with us? Surely we may come boldly to him, and confess our guilt. He who is numbered with us cannot condemn us. Was he not put down in the transgressor’s list that we might be written in the red roll of the saints? He was holy, and written among the holy; we were guilty, and numbered among the guilty; he transfers his name from yonder list to this black indictment, and our names are taken from the indictment and written in the roll of acceptance, for there is a complete transfer made between Jesus and his people. All our estate of misery and sin Jesus has taken; and all that Jesus has comes to us. His righteousness, his blood, and everything that he hath he gives us as our dowry. Rejoice, believer, in your union to him who was numbered among the transgressors; and prove that you are truly saved by being manifestly numbered with those who are new creatures in him.

# Word Live – 3/30/21

[**https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/**](https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/wordlive/)

# Scripture Union – 3/30/21

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# Today in the Word – 3/30/21

# Miriam - Competing for Leadership

**Read:** [**Numbers 12:1–8**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+12%3a1%e2%80%938)

### **Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses**

12 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2“Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” And the Lord heard this.

3(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

4At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, “Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you.” So the three of them went out. 5Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, 6he said, “Listen to my words:

“When there is a prophet among you,  
    I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions,  
    I speak to them in dreams.  
7But this is not true of my servant Moses;  
    he is faithful in all my house.  
8With him I speak face to face,  
    clearly and not in riddles;  
    he sees the form of the Lord.  
Why then were you not afraid  
    to speak against my servant Moses?”

At times, we all experience envy—resenting the blessing or success of others. But envy can be particularly damaging when we let it divide the people of God. In Numbers 11, the Israelites had been wandering in the wilderness for two years, and they were frustrated. They claimed they were treated better in Egypt, and even complained about the manna God provided (11:1–6). They wanted meat! Finally, God sent quail—more than they could eat (11:31–34). But because of their continued discontent, God also sent a plague.

The power of the wicked will be broken, but the Lord upholds the righteous. Psalm 37:17

Not long after, Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses (12:1). The surface complaint was that Moses had taken a Cushite wife. However, the real issue was jealousy. “Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?” they asked. “Hasn’t he also spoken through us?” (v. 2). This sibling trio was being pulled apart by envy and competition. The use of the feminine singular verb in verse 1 implicates Miriam as the point person. Aaron followed her lead. Verse 2 ends with an ominous declaration of God’s omniscience: “And the Lord heard this.”

We are told in verse 3 that Moses responded to these accusations with “humility.” But God—in true parental fashion—called all three siblings to the tent of meeting for a talk. Miriam must have been shaking in her sandals when the Lord appeared in a pillar of cloud (v. 6). Aaron, the priest, would typically have been allowed entrance. But on this day, God stopped them all at the door—a clear signal of divine displeasure. From the cloud, God spoke. He focused on Moses’ faithfulness and uniqueness. God communicated more directly with Moses than with any other prophet.

**Apply the Word**

From this passage, we can take away a challenge and a charge. First, we must guard ourselves against envy. Yank it out early before it puts down roots. And second, we must strive for the distinction that Moses earned: a humble and faithful servant of the Lord.

### **Pray with Us**

May we delight so fervently in your purposes that we give no thought to ourselves. May we have true humility that proceeds from recognizing our position before you, seeking you faithfully in all we endeavor!

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/30/21

# Got Your Nose

 **Read:** [**Exodus 12:12–19**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2012.12%E2%80%9319)

12“On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. 13The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

14“This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord—a lasting ordinance. 15For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. 16On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.

17“Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. 18In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. 19For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel.

I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. [Exodus 12:12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2012.12)

“Why are the statues’ noses broken?” That’s the number one question visitors ask Edward Bleiberg, curator of Egyptian art at the Brooklyn Museum.

Bleiberg can’t blame it on normal wear and tear; even two-dimensional painted figures are missing noses. He surmises that such destruction must have been intentional. Enemies meant to kill Egypt’s gods. It’s as if they were playing a game of “got your nose” with them. Invading armies broke off the noses of these idols so they couldn’t breathe.

Really? That’s all it took? With gods like these, Pharaoh should have known he was in trouble. Yes, he had an army and the allegiance of a whole nation. The Hebrews were weary slaves led by a timid fugitive named Moses. But Israel had the living God, and Pharaoh’s gods were pretenders. Ten plagues later, their imaginary lives were snuffed out.

Israel celebrated their victory with the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when they ate bread without yeast for a week ([Exodus 12:17](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2012.17); [13:7–9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exodus%2013.7%E2%80%939)). Yeast symbolizes sin, and God wanted His people to remember their rescued lives belong entirely to Him.

Our Father says to idols, “Got your nose,” and to His children, “Got your life.” Serve the God who gives you breath, and rest in His loving arms.

By:  [Mike Wittmer](https://odb.org/author/mwittmer/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What false god is suffocating your life? How might you show God you’re trusting only in Him?

Father of life, I give You my life. Help me recognize that any perceived “enemies” in my life are nothing compared to Your power.

#### **Insight**

In preparation for the last plague on Egypt, God told His people to slaughter a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts of their houses ([Exodus 12:1–13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Exod%2012.1%E2%80%9313)). God’s angel of death would move across Egypt and take the lives of all firstborn sons but would pass over any household with the sprinkled blood. The lamb was then roasted and eaten along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The unleavened bread signified Israel’s haste to leave Egypt. When leaven was added to dough, it would take hours for the dough to rise before baking. The Israelites didn’t have time to wait for the dough to rise. The herbs symbolized the bitterness of slavery in Egypt.

# God Calling – 3/30/21

# Deliverance

Be calm, be true, be quiet. I watch over you.

Rest in My Love. Joy in the very Beauty of Holiness. You are Mine. Deliverance is here for you, but Thankfulness and Joy open the gates.

Try in all things to be very glad, very happy, very thankful. It is not to quiet resignation I give My blessings, but to joyful acceptance and anticipation.

Laughter is the outward expression of joy. That is why I urge upon you Love and Laughter.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." - 2 Peter 2:9

# My Utmost for His Highest – 3/31/21

# Heedfulness or Hypocrisy in Ourselves?

# Heedfulness or Hypocrisy in Ourselves?

If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. —[1 John 5:16](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=1+John+5%3A16)

If we are not heedful and pay no attention to the way the Spirit of God works in us, we will become spiritual hypocrites. We see where other people are failing, and then we take our discernment and turn it into comments of ridicule and criticism, instead of turning it into intercession on their behalf. God reveals this truth about others to us not through the sharpness of our minds but through the direct penetration of His Spirit. If we are not attentive, we will be completely unaware of the source of the discernment God has given us, becoming critical of others and forgetting that God says, “…he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death.” Be careful that you don’t become a hypocrite by spending all your time trying to get others right with God before you worship Him yourself.

One of the most subtle and illusive burdens God ever places on us as saints is this burden of discernment concerning others. He gives us discernment so that we may accept the responsibility for those souls before Him and form the mind of Christ about them (see [Philippians 2:5](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+2:5)). We should intercede in accordance with what God says He will give us, namely, “life for those who commit sin not leading to death.” It is not that we are able to bring God into contact with our minds, but that we awaken ourselves to the point where God is able to convey His mind to us regarding the people for whom we intercede.

Can Jesus Christ see the agony of His soul in us? He can’t unless we are so closely identified with Him that we have His view concerning the people for whom we pray. May we learn to intercede so wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ will be completely and overwhelmingly satisfied with us as intercessors.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Am I becoming more and more in love with God as a holy God, or with the conception of an amiable Being who says, “Oh well, sin doesn’t matter much”?  Disciples Indeed, 389 L

# CCEL – 3/31/21

**My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**—[PHIL. 4:19.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.19)

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all … things shall be added unto you.—He that spared not his Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?

All things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.—As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.—The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly.—The living God, … giveth us richly all things to enjoy.—God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

[Matt. 6:33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.33). -[Rom. 8:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.8.html#Rom.8.32). -[I Cor. 3:21-23](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iCor.3.html" \l "iCor.3.21). -[II Cor. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html#iiCor.6.10).[Psa. 23:1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.23.html" \l "Ps.23.1). -[Psa. 84:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.84.html" \l "Ps.84.11). -[I Tim. 6:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iTim.6.html" \l "iTim.6.17). -[II Cor. 9:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.9.html#iiCor.9.8).

“With his stripes we are healed.” **[Isaiah 53:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.53.html" \l "Isa.53.5)**

Pilate delivered our Lord to the lictors to be scourged. The Roman scourge was a most dreadful instrument of torture. It was made of the sinews of oxen, and sharp bones were inter-twisted every here and there among the sinews; so that every time the lash came down these pieces of bone inflicted fearful laceration, and tore off the flesh from the bone. The Saviour was, no doubt, bound to the column, and thus beaten. He had been beaten before; but this of the Roman lictors was probably the most severe of his flagellations. My soul, stand here and weep over his poor stricken body.

Believer in Jesus, can you gaze upon him without tears, as he stands before you the mirror of agonizing love? He is at once fair as the lily for innocence, and red as the rose with the crimson of his own blood. As we feel the sure and blessed healing which his stripes have wrought in us, does not our heart melt at once with love and grief? If ever we have loved our Lord Jesus, surely we must feel that affection glowing now within our bosoms.

“See how the patient Jesus stands,

Insulted in his lowest case!

Sinners have bound the Almighty’s hands,

And spit in their Creator’s face.

With thorns his temples gor'd and gash'd

Send streams of blood from every part;

His back’s with knotted scourges lash'd.

But sharper scourges tear his heart.”

We would fain go to our chambers and weep; but since our business calls us away, we will first pray our Beloved to print the image of his bleeding self upon the tablets of our hearts all the day, and at nightfall we will return to commune with him, and sorrow that our sin should have cost him so dear.

# Word Live – 3/31/21

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

# Scripture Union – 3/31/21

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

# Today in the Word – 3/31/21

# Miriam - A Solemn Warning

**Read:** [**Numbers 12:9–16**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+12%3a9%e2%80%9316)

9The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them.

10When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam’s skin was leprous[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+12%3a9%e2%80%9316#fen-NIV-4070a)]—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, 11and he said to Moses, “Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. 12Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother’s womb with its flesh half eaten away.”

13So Moses cried out to the Lord, “Please, God, heal her!”

14The Lord replied to Moses, “If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back.” 15So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.

16After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Numbers 12:10](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Numbers+12%3a9%e2%80%9316#en-NIV-4070) The Hebrew for leprous was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

Like all parents everywhere, my husband and I have frequent conversations about how to discipline our children. Often we ask ourselves: Does the punishment fit the crime? Will this particular consequence teach the lesson we long for our kids to learn? The answer isn’t always as obvious as one might imagine. Are we being too lenient? Or too harsh?

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. Ecclesiastes 12:13

From a human perspective, God’s discipline toward Miriam in Numbers chapter 12 might seem too severe. Even after He verbally chastised her and Aaron for their jealously, God’s anger still burned toward them. So much so that He followed up His lecture with leprous sores all over Miriam’s body—and only hers (vv. 10–11). It is the first case of leprosy recorded in the Bible. Immediately, Aaron began to plead for her deliverance. He did not just ask for healing though. He begged for mercy: “I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed” (v. 11). Note that he addressed his plea to Moses. Not to God. He had been humbled and knew now his deferential place.

Without question, hesitation, or condemnation, Moses cried out to the Lord on Miriam’s behalf: “Please, God, heal her!” (v. 13). God’s response demonstrates both His holiness and His grace. Miriam would endure seven days of the disease. For seven days, she would be banished from her community, sending a strong message regarding the seriousness of sin to all of God’s people who could not move until she was cleansed and restored.

**Apply the Word**

Hebrews 12:6 tells us that “the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Has God allowed the consequences of sin to be made manifest in your life or the lives of people you love? What did it teach you? As we conclude this study, which woman’s story has resonated most deeply with you? What have you learned about God by studying their lives?

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, you alone bring joy out of pain, and even your discipline demonstrates your mercy. Teach us to submit to your rebuke with the humility of Aaron. Thank you for your forgiveness!

## BY Kelli Worrall

# Our Daily Bread – 3/31/21

# Wisely Weeding

 **Read:** [**Psalm 139:1–6**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.1%E2%80%936)

#### **For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.**

1You have searched me, Lord,  
    and you know me.  
2You know when I sit and when I rise;  
    you perceive my thoughts from afar.  
3You discern my going out and my lying down;  
    you are familiar with all my ways.  
4Before a word is on my tongue  
    you, Lord, know it completely.  
5You hem me in behind and before,  
    and you lay your hand upon me.  
6Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,  
    too lofty for me to attain.

**Read:** [**Psalm 139:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.1%E2%80%936)[**23–24**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Psalm%20139.23%E2%80%9324)

23Search me, God, and know my heart;  
    test me and know my anxious thoughts.  
24See if there is any offensive way in me,  
    and lead me in the way everlasting.

Search me, God, and know my heart. [Psalm 139:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.23)

My grandchildren are running around my backyard. Playing games? No, pulling weeds. “Pulling them up by the roots!” the youngest says, showing me a hefty prize. Her delight as we tackled weeds that day was how much we enjoyed plucking the weedy roots—clearing away each pesky menace. Before the joy, however, came the choice to go after them.

Intentional weeding is also the first step in removing personal sin. Thus, David prayed: “Search me, God, and know my heart. . . . See if there is any offensive way in me” ([Psalm 139:23–24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139.23%E2%80%9324)).

What a wise approach, to go after our sin by asking God to show it to us. He above all knows everything about us. “You have searched me, Lord, and you know me,” wrote the psalmist. “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar” (vv. 1–2).

“Such knowledge,” David added, “is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain” (v. 6). Even before a sin takes root, therefore, God can alert us to the danger. He knows our “landscape.” So when a sneaky sinful attitude tries to take root, He’s first to know and point it out.

“Where can I go from your Spirit,” wrote David. “Where can I flee from your presence?” (v. 7). May we closely follow our Savior to higher ground!

By:  [Patricia Raybon](https://odb.org/author/patriciaraybon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When you ask God to search your heart, what personal wrongs do you discover? How does intentional “weeding” help rid you of a relentless sin?

Loving God, when You show me my personal sin, point me to Your plan to pull those weeds.

#### **Insight**

In the Bible we read of God’s omniscience—His knowledge of everything. In [1 Samuel 2:3](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Sam%202.3), Hannah declares that He’s the “God who knows.” In [Psalm 44:21](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2044.21), the psalmist says “he knows the secrets of the heart.”

In [Psalm 139](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%20139), David marvels that God knows his every move and thought (vv. 1–4). Yet instead of trembling with fear, David’s awestruck at the thought that God has such intimate knowledge of him (v. 6). Why? Because David has a close relationship with God—he loves and is loved by Him. As a result, he can ask God to search his heart and, if he’s found wanting, to lead him down the right path (vv. 23–24). Our all-seeing and all-knowing God “searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought” ([1 Chronicles 28:9](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2028.9)).

# God Calling – 3/31/21

# Love's Offering

I am your Lord, gracious and loving. Rest in My Love, walk in My ways. Each week is a week of progress, steady progress upward. You may not see it, but I do.

I judge not by outward appearances, I judge the heart, and I see in both your hearts one single desire, to do My Will. The simplest offering by a child brought or done with the one desire to give you pleasure, or to show you love, is it not more loved by you than the offerings of those who love you not?

So, though you may feel that your work has been spoiled and tarnished, I see it only as Love's offering. Courage, My children.

When climbing a steep hill, a man is often more conscious of the weakness of his stumbling feet than of the view, the grandeur, or even of his upward progress.

Persevere, persevere. Love and laugh. Rejoice.

"The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." - 1 Samuel 16:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/1/21

# Helpful or Heartless Toward Others?



It is Christ…who also makes intercession for us….the Spirit…makes intercession for the saints… —[Romans 8:34, 27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Romans+8%3A34%2C+27)

Do we need any more arguments than these to become intercessors– that Christ “always lives to make intercession” ([Hebrews 7:25](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+7:25)), and that the Holy Spirit “makes intercession for the saints”? Are we living in such a relationship with others that we do the work of intercession as a result of being the children of God who are taught by His Spirit? We should take a look at our current circumstances. Do crises which affect us or others in our home, business, country, or elsewhere, seem to be crushing in on us? Are we being pushed out of the presence of God and left with no time for worship? If so, we must put a stop to such distractions and get into such a living relationship with God that our relationship with others is maintained through the work of intercession, where God works His miracles.

Beware of getting ahead of God by your very desire to do His will. We run ahead of Him in a thousand and one activities, becoming so burdened with people and problems that we don’t worship God, and we fail to intercede. If a burden and its resulting pressure come upon us while we are not in an attitude of worship, it will only produce a hardness toward God and despair in our own souls. God continually introduces us to people in whom we have no interest, and unless we are worshiping God the natural tendency is to be heartless toward them. We give them a quick verse of Scripture, like jabbing them with a spear, or leave them with a hurried, uncaring word of counsel before we go. A heartless Christian must be a terrible grief to our Lord.

Are our lives in the proper place so that we may participate in the intercession of our Lord and the Holy Spirit?

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

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

# CCEL – 4/1/21

**The fruit of the Spirit is joy.**—[GAL. 5:22.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gal.5.html" \l "Gal.5.22)

Joy in the Holy Ghost.—Unspeakable and full of glory.

Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; . . . exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.—We glory in tribulations.

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; . . . for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame.—These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be fuIl.—As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.—The joy of the Lord is your strength.

In thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.—For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

[Rom. 14:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.14.html" \l "Rom.14.17). -[I Pet. 1:8](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iPet.1.html#iPet.1.8).[II Cor. 6:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html#iiCor.6.10);[7:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.7.html" \l "iiCor.7.4). -[Rom. 5:3](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.5.html" \l "Rom.5.3).[Heb. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.2). -[John 15:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.15.html" \l "John.15.11). -[II Cor. 1:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.1.html" \l "iiCor.1.5).[Phi. 4:4](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Phil.4.html" \l "Phil.4.4). -[Neh. 8:10](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Neh.8.html" \l "Neh.8.10).[Psa. 16:11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.16.html" \l "Ps.16.11). -[Rev. 7:17](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.7.html" \l "Rev.7.17).

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” **[Song of Solomon 1:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Song.1.html" \l "Song.1.2)**

For several days we have been dwelling upon the Saviour’s passion, and for some little time to come we shall linger there. In beginning a new month, let us seek the same desires after our Lord as those which glowed in the heart of the elect spouse. See how she leaps at once to him; there are no prefatory words; she does not even mention his name; she is in the heart of her theme at once, for she speaks of him who was the only him in the world to her. How bold is her love! It was much condescension which permitted the weeping penitent to anoint his feet with spikenard—it was rich love which allowed the gentle Mary to sit at his feet and learn of him—but here, love, strong, fervent love, aspires to higher tokens of regard, and closer signs of fellowship. Esther trembled in the presence of Ahasuerus, but the spouse in joyful liberty of perfect love knows no fear. If we have received the same free spirit, we also may ask the like. By kisses we suppose to be intended those varied manifestations of affection by which the believer is made to enjoy the love of Jesus. The kiss of reconciliation we enjoyed at our conversion, and it was sweet as honey dropping from the comb. The kiss of acceptance is still warm on our brow, as we know that he hath accepted our persons and our works through rich grace. The kiss of daily, present communion is that which we pant after to be repeated day after day, till it is changed into the kiss of reception, which removes the soul from earth, and the kiss of consummation which fills it with the joy of heaven. Faith is our walk, but fellowship sensibly felt is our rest. Faith is the road, but communion with Jesus is the well from which the pilgrim drinks. O lover of our souls, be not strange to us; let the lips of thy blessing meet the lips of our asking; let the lips of thy fulness touch the lips of our need, and straightway the kiss will be effected.

# Word Live – 4/1/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/1/21

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# Today in the Word – 4/1/21

# C:\Users\Margaret\Downloads\TITW_Apri_Desktop_1200x400.20210309172441075.jpgTeach Us to Pray

**Read:** [**Matthew 6:5–13**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313)

### **Prayer**

5“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9“This, then, is how you should pray:

“‘Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
10your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
    on earth as it is in heaven.  
11Give us today our daily bread.  
12And forgive us our debts,  
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
13And lead us not into temptation,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313" \l "fen-NIV-23296a" \o "See footnote a)]  
    but deliver us from the evil one.[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#fen-NIV-23296b)]’

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Matthew 6:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-23296) The Greek for temptation can also mean testing.
2. [Matthew 6:13](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+6%3a5%e2%80%9313#en-NIV-23296) Or from evil; some late manuscripts one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Pastor David Platt says, “The primary purpose of prayer is not to get something, but to know Someone.” This month, as we focus on powerful prayers from the Bible, we want to learn how we may become better people of prayer. With all that is happening in our world and in our personal lives, it is important to examine and strengthen our prayer lives.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Matthew 6:6

Oftentimes we forget that Jesus was not only a master teacher and miracle worker but also a master “pray-er.” Throughout the gospels, we see Jesus praying for others, with others, alone, and in nature. Luke tells us that Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed. His whole life was soaked in prayer (Luke 5:16).

In our text today, Jesus teaches His disciples that prayer begins with a humble heart and right attitude toward God and others (vv. 5–6). Unlike the religious elites, He tells His followers that their heavenly Father answers the prayer of those who understand who they are in light of who God is. We must remember though, as Platt says, that the “reward” is not necessarily getting something, but knowing Someone (v. 6).

Jesus also taught His listeners that their prayer ought to be purposeful. Unlike the pagans who babble with many words, our prayers ought to be properly directed and honestly pronounced (vv. 7–8). Jesus gives a pattern of prayer for His listeners to follow that has come to be known today as the Lord’s Prayer (vv. 9–13). We will unpack this prayer later this month, but as we approach Good Friday, examine your own motives in prayer. Make it your aim not to seek things, but to get to know Him more.

**Apply the Word**

This month, make it a point to set aside a time and place for consistent prayer. Choose a quiet place where you will be able to silence your mind and quiet your soul so you can dialogue with your heavenly Father.

### **Pray with Us**

Lord, as we study powerful prayers from the Bible, place our hearts in a proper posture before you. Teach us to pray with humility and honesty, and with ears tuned to your voice.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/1/21

# “So Helpful”

 **Read:** [**1 Peter 4:7–11**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%204.7%E2%80%9311)

7The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. 8Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. 10Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. 11If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. [Romans 12:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.13)

The caller to the Christian radio station said that his wife was coming home from the hospital following surgery. Then he shared something that spoke deeply to my heart: “Everyone in our church family has been so helpful in taking care of us during this time.”

When I heard this simple statement, it reminded me of the value and necessity of Christian hospitality and care. I began to think that the love and support of fellow believers for one another is one of the greatest ways to demonstrate the life-changing power of the gospel.

In First Peter, the apostle was writing a letter to be circulated among the first-century churches in what’s now the country of Turkey. In that letter, he compelled his readers to do something that his friend Paul wrote about in [Romans 12:13](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.13): “Practice hospitality.” Peter said, “Love each other deeply . . . offer hospitality,” and he told them to use the gifts God gave them to “serve others” ([1 Peter 4:8–10](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%204.8%E2%80%9310)). These are clear directions to all believers in Jesus for how we’re to treat fellow believers.

All of us know people like that caller’s wife—those who need someone to come alongside and show concern and Christlike love. In God’s strength, may we be among the ones who are noted for being “so helpful.”

By:  [Dave Branon](https://odb.org/author/davebranon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

What has God equipped you to do for those in need? How has God revealed His own hospitable nature?

Loving God, help me to look around for people who need an encouraging word or action from me. Then help me offer hospitality to them.

#### **Insight**

In [1 Peter 4:10–11](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Pet%204.10%E2%80%9311), Peter briefly mentions the value of spiritual gifts, a topic Paul discusses more fully in [Romans 12:4–8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012.4%E2%80%938) and [1 Corinthians 12–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012%E2%80%9314). [Romans 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Rom%2012) gives what some scholars view as a sampling (as opposed to an exhaustive catalog) of spiritual gifts. In [1 Corinthians 12–14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012%E2%80%9314), Paul lists many of those same gifts, but adds several others. The main feature of [1 Corinthians 12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Cor%2012), however, is that it provides the primary purpose of gifts: “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (v. 7). Notice the phrase “for the common good.” Our gifts aren’t for us; they’re for one another. When all the members of the body are using their gifts, all members of the body are being served well.

# God Calling – 4/1/21

# Shut Out From God

Do you not see, My children, that you have not yet learned all? Soon, very soon, you will have mastered your lesson, and then you will truly be able to do all things through Me and My Strength. Did you not see it with My Disciples? Timid, faithless followers, and then, so soon, themselves leaders, healers, conquerors, through Me.

All knowledge was Mine, given Me of My Father, and Mine in manhood's years on earth. You understand this, My children, I know you do.

Thousands of My servants have gone to their betrayal and death, and others, who knew Me not, with no agony before it.

Had I not been Son of God, bearing man's weight of sin, voluntarily bearing it until of My own free will -- for that moment's horror, I was shut out from His sight with man, the sinner, for one short space -- had I not been God, had not this been My suffering -- then I was but a craven mortal.

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/2/21

# The Glory That’s Unsurpassed



…the Lord Jesus…has sent me that you may receive your sight… —[Acts 9:17](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Acts+9%3A17)

When Paul received his sight, he also received spiritual insight into the Person of Jesus Christ. His entire life and preaching from that point on were totally consumed with nothing but Jesus Christ— “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” ([1 Corinthians 2:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+2:2)). Paul never again allowed anything to attract and hold the attention of his mind and soul except the face of Jesus Christ.

We must learn to maintain a strong degree of character in our lives, even to the level that has been revealed in our vision of Jesus Christ.

The lasting characteristic of a spiritual man is the ability to understand correctly the meaning of the Lord Jesus Christ in his life, and the ability to explain the purposes of God to others. The overruling passion of his life is Jesus Christ. Whenever you see this quality in a person, you get the feeling that he is truly a man after God’s own heart (see [Acts 13:22](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+13:22)).

Never allow anything to divert you from your insight into Jesus Christ. It is the true test of whether you are spiritual or not. To be unspiritual means that other things have a growing fascination for you.

Since mine eyes have looked on Jesus,  
I’ve lost sight of all beside,  
So enchained my spirit’s vision,  
Gazing on the Crucified.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

Our danger is to water down God’s word to suit ourselves. God never fits His word to suit me; He fits me to suit His word. Not Knowing Whither, 901 R

# CCEL – 4/2/21

**If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only.**—[I SAM. 7:3.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.7.html" \l "iSam.7.3)

Little children, keep yourselves from idols.—Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.—Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.—Serve him with a perfect heart with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.

Behold, thou desireth truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.—Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

[I John 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.5.html" \l "iJohn.5.21). -[II Cor. 6:17,18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.6.html" \l "iiCor.6.17). -[Matt. 6:24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.6.html" \l "Matt.6.24).[Exo. 34:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.34.html" \l "Exod.34.14). -[I Chr. 28:9](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iChr.28.html" \l "iChr.28.9).[Psa. 51:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Ps.51.html" \l "Ps.51.6). -[I Sam. 16:7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iSam.16.html" \l "iSam.16.7). -[I John 3:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iJohn.3.html" \l "iJohn.3.21).

“He answered him to never a word.” **[Matthew 27:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.27.html" \l "Matt.27.14)**

He had never been slow of speech when he could bless the sons of men, but he would not say a single word for himself. “Never man spake like this man,” and never man was silent like him. Was this singular silence the index of his perfect self-sacrifice? Did it show that he would not utter a word to stay the slaughter of his sacred person, which he had dedicated as an offering for us? Had he so entirely surrendered himself that he would not interfere in his own behalf, even in the minutest degree, but be bound and slain an unstruggling, uncomplaining victim? Was this silence a type of the defencelessness of sin? Nothing can be said in palliation or excuse of human guilt; and, therefore, he who bore its whole weight stood speechless before his judge. Is not patient silence the best reply to a gainsaying world? Calm endurance answers some questions infinitely more conclusively than the loftiest eloquence. The best apologists for Christianity in the early days were its martyrs. The anvil breaks a host of hammers by quietly bearing their blows. Did not the silent Lamb of God furnish us with a grand example of wisdom? Where every word was occasion for new blasphemy, it was the line of duty to afford no fuel for the flame of sin. The ambiguous and the false, the unworthy and mean, will ere long overthrow and confute themselves, and therefore the true can afford to be quiet, and finds silence to be its wisdom. Evidently our Lord, by his silence, furnished a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. A long defence of himself would have been contrary to Isaiah’s prediction: “He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” By his quiet he conclusively proved himself to be the true Lamb of God. As such we salute him this morning. Be with us, Jesus, and in the silence of our heart, let us hear the voice of thy love.

# Word Live – 4/2/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/2/21

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# Today in the Word – 4/2/21

# Not My Will

**Read:** [**Matthew 26:36–46**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+26%3a36%e2%80%9346)

### **Gethsemane**

36Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

39Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

40Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” he asked Peter. 41“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

42He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

43When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

45Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

After celebrating their Passover meal, Jesus and His disciples went to a garden called Gethsemane, which literally means “olive press.” The garden was located on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. Olives from the neighborhood were brought and crushed there producing oil for Jerusalem and the surrounding region. The name seems fitting since Jesus would be taken away from that garden. He would be crushed and His grace distributed not just to Jerusalem and the region, but to the whole world.

Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. Matthew 26:41

At Gethsemane, Jesus grieved because He knew what was going to happen. In part, He was distressed because He knew the physical horror that awaited Him (vv. 38–39). He also was exceedingly sorrowful because of the spiritual horror he was about to endure by standing in the place of guilty sinners and receiving their due punishment. Jesus’ prayers at Gethsemane centered on these words: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will” (v. 39). He prayed this not as a request, because God the Father would never deny the Son any request. Rather, Jesus’ prayer signifies both the severity of what was about to take place and His acceptance of surrendering His life to accomplish the will of His Father.

Repeatedly throughout the Old Testament, the cup is a powerful picture of God’s wrath and judgement. Who better than Jesus could fully understand God the Father’s wrath and judgement? Jesus wasn’t necessarily afraid of physical death, but rather, He was anticipating the judgment of all humanity’s sin. Before Judas the betrayer showed up at Gethsemane, Jesus the Redeemer, because of His love for the world, resolved that God the Father’s will would be done (vv. 39, 42).

**Apply the Word**

Because Jesus received our judgement, you and I are counted innocent of our sin. Jesus surrendered His life for us. We too, ought to surrender our lives for Him.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, thank you for all that you have suffered for us! Fill our hearts with ever-increasing gratitude. May we sincerely pray with Christ, “Yet not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:39).

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/2/21

# The Cost

 **Read:** [**John 19:25–30**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.25%E2%80%9330)

25Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman,[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19%3A25%E2%80%9330&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-26852a" \o "See footnote a)] here is your son,” 27and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

### **The Death of Jesus**

28Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. 30When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 19:26](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+19%3A25%E2%80%9330&version=NIV#en-NIV-26852) The Greek for Woman does not denote any disrespect.

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. [John 19:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.30)

Michelangelo’s works explored many facets of the life of Jesus, yet one of the most poignant was also one of the most simple. In the 1540s he sketched a pieta (a picture of Jesus’ mother holding the body of the dead Christ) for his friend Vittoria Colonna. Done in chalk, the drawing depicts Mary looking to the heavens as she cradles her Son’s still form. Rising behind Mary, the upright beam of the cross carries these words from Dante’s Paradise, “There they don’t think of how much blood it costs.” Michelangelo’s point was profound: when we contemplate the death of Jesus, we must consider the price He paid.

The price paid by Christ is captured in His dying declaration, “It is finished” ([John 19:30](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2019.30)). The term for “it is finished” (tetelestai) was used in several ways—to show a bill had been paid, a task finished, a sacrifice offered, a masterpiece completed. Each of them applies to what Jesus did on our behalf on the cross! Perhaps that’s why the apostle Paul wrote, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world” ([Galatians 6:14](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Gal%206.14)).

Jesus’ willingness to take our place is the eternal evidence of how much God loves us. As we contemplate the price He paid, may we also celebrate His love—and give thanks for the cross.

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How could each meaning of tetelestai be applied to the cross of Jesus and what He accomplished there? Why does each one have meaning to you?

Father, when I consider the sacrifice Jesus made on my behalf, I am humbled and deeply grateful. Thank You for Jesus, and thank You for the cross.

#### **Insight**

Why is the gospel of John so different from Matthew, Mark, and Luke? The likely answer is that John was writing somewhat later in the first century ad and under different circumstances. While the biggest challenge facing the authors of Matthew, Mark, and Luke was whether Jesus was the promised Messiah who inaugurated God’s kingdom, for John the most pressing question is whether Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. Some false teachers had begun to claim that Jesus was merely human and not truly God. Others said Jesus may be divine, but He only appeared to be human. John writes to combat both false teachings. Only if Jesus is fully human and fully divine can He provide salvation for the sins of the world. The consistent theme throughout John’s gospel is that Jesus is the self-revelation of God, who provides eternal life to all who believe (see 3:16).

# God Calling – 4/2/21

# The Priceless Blessing

I am here. Here is truly as I was with My Disciples of old. Here to help and bless you. Here to company with you. Do you know, even yet, My children, that this is the priceless blessing of your lives? I forgive you, as you have prayed Me to, for all neglects of My commands, but start anew from today.

Study My words and carry them out unflinchingly, unflinching. As you do this, you will find that you are miracle-workers, workers together with Me -- for Me. Remember this, not what you do, but what you are -- that is the miracle-working power.

Changed by My Spirit, shedding one garment of Spirit for a better; in time throwing that aside for a yet finer one, and so on from character to character, gradually transformed into My likeness.

Joy, Joy, Joy.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." John 14:21

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/3/21

# “If You Had Known!”



If you had known…in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. —[Luke 19:42](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Luke+19%3A42)

Jesus entered Jerusalem triumphantly and the city was stirred to its very foundations, but a strange god was there– the pride of the Pharisees. It was a god that seemed religious and upright, but Jesus compared it to “whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” ([Matthew 23:27](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23:27)).

What is it that blinds you to the peace of God “in this your day”? Do you have a strange god– not a disgusting monster but perhaps an unholy nature that controls your life? More than once God has brought me face to face with a strange god in my life, and I knew that I should have given it up, but I didn’t do it. I got through the crisis “by the skin of my teeth,” only to find myself still under the control of that strange god. I am blind to the very things that make for my own peace. It is a shocking thing that we can be in the exact place where the Spirit of God should be having His completely unhindered way with us, and yet we only make matters worse, increasing our blame in God’s eyes.

“If you had known….” God’s words here cut directly to the heart, with the tears of Jesus behind them. These words imply responsibility for our own faults. God holds us accountable for what we refuse to see or are unable to see because of our sin. And “now they are hidden from your eyes” because you have never completely yielded your nature to Him. Oh, the deep, unending sadness for what might have been! God never again opens the doors that have been closed. He opens other doors, but He reminds us that there are doors which we have shut– doors which had no need to be shut. Never be afraid when God brings back your past. Let your memory have its way with you. It is a minister of God bringing its rebuke and sorrow to you. God will turn what might have been into a wonderful lesson of growth for the future.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The fiery furnaces are there by God’s direct permission. It is misleading to imagine that we are developed in spite of our circumstances; we are developed because of them. It is mastery in circumstances that is needed, not mastery over them. The Love of God—The Message of Invincible Consolation, 674 R

# CCEL – 4/3/21

**Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness.**—[II PET. 3:8,9.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiPet.3.html" \l "iiPet.3.8)

My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall acomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

[Isa. 55:8-11](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.55.html#Isa.55.8).[Rom. 11:32,33](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rom.11.html" \l "Rom.11.32).

“They took Jesus, and led him away.” **[John 19:16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.John.19.html" \l "John.19.16)**

He had been all night in agony, he had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, he had been hurried from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate; he had, therefore, but little strength left, and yet neither refreshment nor rest were permitted him. They were eager for his blood, and therefore led him out to die, loaded with the cross. O dolorous procession! Well may Salem’s daughters weep. My soul, do thou weep also.

What learn we here as we see our blessed Lord led forth? Do we not perceive that truth which was set forth in shadow by the scapegoat? Did not the high-priest bring the scapegoat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat, and cease from the people? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people, so that if they were sought for they could not be found. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce him guilty; God himself imputes our sins to him, “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;” “He was made sin for us;” and, as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin upon his shoulders, represented by the cross; we see the great Scapegoat led away by the appointed officers of justice. Beloved, can you feel assured that he carried your sin? As you look at the cross upon his shoulders, does it represent your sin? There is one way by which you can tell whether he carried your sin or not. Have you laid your hand upon his head, confessed your sin, and trusted in him? Then your sin lies not on you; it has all been transferred by blessed imputation to Christ, and he bears it on his shoulder as a load heavier than the cross.

Let not the picture vanish till you have rejoiced in your own deliverance, and adored the loving Redeemer upon whom your iniquities were laid.

# Word Live – 4/3/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/3/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/3/21

# Three Prayers from the Cross

**Read:** [**Luke 23:44–49**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3a44%e2%80%9349)

### **The Death of Jesus**

44It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46Jesus called out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3a44%e2%80%9349#fen-NIV-25982a)] When he had said this, he breathed his last.

47The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, “Surely this was a righteous man.” 48When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. 49But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Luke 23:46](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+23%3a44%e2%80%9349#en-NIV-25982) Psalm 31:5

On the cross, Jesus was mostly silent. The excruciating pain He endured would have made it nearly impossible for Him to speak. Any utterance would have used the strength needed to pull himself up by His impaled hands and feet in order to take a breath. Therefore, the words Jesus spoke from the cross are significant. Among the seven expressions attributed to Jesus during His crucifixion, three were prayers to His heavenly Father.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Mark 15:34

His first words from the cross were a prayer. As the soldiers divided His clothes and cast lots, He cried out, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). We see that even in the midst of injustice and humiliation, Jesus prayed for His persecutors. The Roman soldiers were doing what they had known and taught. Their allegiance was to the emperor, and they cared little about the Jewish scuffles of the day. However, we would later see that Jesus’ prayer is answered, as the centurion overseeing the execution praised and confessed that Jesus was indeed a righteous man, the Son of God (Mark 15:39; Luke 23:47).

Jesus’ second prayer, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34) is a recitation of Psalm 22. Many scholars believe this is an indication of the only time in Jesus’ life when He was abandoned by the Father. Some scholars argue that this was the moment when the Son took upon Himself the sins of all humanity, and the Father turned from the presence of sin. Regardless of one’s interpretation, Jesus’ second prayer exemplifies the depth of His suffering on our behalf.

Jesus’ final utterance from the cross is also His third prayer, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Here, Jesus quotes Psalm 31:5 and announces to all His trust in His heavenly Father to raise Him from the dead. Just a few days later, He did!

**Apply the Word**

Take time today to read and reflect on Christ’s prayers from the cross. How are His prayers meaningful to you during this Holy Week?

### **Pray with Us**

We are sobered by this picture of Christ’s suffering on our behalf. We recognize your wrath against sinners, Lord God. Teach us the true weight of sin so that we may better grasp the significance of grace.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/3/21

# Riding the Waves

**Read:** [**Psalm 89:5–17**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089.5%E2%80%9317)

5The heavens praise your wonders, Lord,  
    your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.  
6For who in the skies above can compare with the Lord?  
    Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings?  
7In the council of the holy ones God is greatly feared;  
    he is more awesome than all who surround him.  
8Who is like you, Lord God Almighty?  
    You, Lord, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.

9You rule over the surging sea;  
    when its waves mount up, you still them.  
10You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;  
    with your strong arm you scattered your enemies.  
11The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth;  
    you founded the world and all that is in it.  
12You created the north and the south;  
    Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your name.  
13Your arm is endowed with power;  
    your hand is strong, your right hand exalted.

14Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;  
    love and faithfulness go before you.  
15Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,  
    who walk in the light of your presence, Lord.  
16They rejoice in your name all day long;  
    they celebrate your righteousness.  
17For you are their glory and strength,  
    and by your favor you exalt our horn.[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+89%3A5%E2%80%9317&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-15344a" \o "See footnote a)]

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Psalm 89:17](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+89%3A5%E2%80%9317&version=NIV#en-NIV-15344) Horn here symbolizes strong one.

Who is like you, Lord God Almighty? You, Lord, are mighty and your faithfulness surrounds you. [Psalm 89:8](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089.8)

As my husband strolled down the rocky beach taking photos of the Hawaiian horizon, I sat on a large rock fretting over another medical setback. Though my problems would be waiting for me when I returned home, I needed peace in that moment. I stared at the incoming waves crashing against the black, jagged rocks. A dark shadow in the curve of the wave caught my eye. Using the zoom option on my camera, I identified the shape as a sea turtle riding the waves peacefully. Its flippers spread wide and still. Turning my face into the salty breeze, I smiled.

The “heavens praise [God’s] wonders” ([Psalm 89:5](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089.5)). Our incomparable God rules “over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, [God] stills them” (v. 9). He “founded the world and all that is in it” (v. 11). He made it all, owns it all, manages it all, and purposes it all for His glory and our enjoyment.

Standing on the foundation of our faith—the love of our unchanging Father—we can “walk in the light of [His] presence” (v. 15). God remains mighty in power and merciful in His dealings with us. We can rejoice in His name all day long (v. 16). No matter what obstacles we face or how many setbacks we have to endure, God holds us as the waves rise and fall.

By:  [Xochitl Dixon](https://odb.org/author/xochitldixon/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

When facing rough waves in life, how can reflecting on God’s wonders fill you with peace, courage, and confidence in His ongoing presence and sufficient care? What situations do you need to release to God as you ride the waves of life?

Father, thank You for empowering me to ride the waves of life with courageous faith, anchored in Your proven faithfulness.

#### **Insight**

[Psalm 89](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089) deals with God’s covenant with David (vv. 3–4), but it wasn’t written by David. The superscription attributes authorship to Ethan the Ezrahite. What do we know about him? [First Kings 4:31](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Kings%204.31) implies he was wise—his wisdom exceeded only by Solomon. Additionally, some scholars believe he’s the Ethan mentioned in [1 Chronicles 15:16–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/1%20Chron%2015.16%E2%80%9318), the son of Kushaiah and one of the Levites appointed to lead Israel’s musical worship. While this gives us some basic information about the songwriter, we’ve nothing to indicate when or why [Psalm 89](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2089) was written. In celebrating the Davidic covenant, however, it focuses on God’s greatness as Creator and His faithfulness as Israel’s God—even when that faithfulness can’t always be seen with human eyes.

# God Calling – 4/3/21

# Greatness is Service

My children, I am here, your waiting Lord, ready at your call. I am among you as one that serveth, Meek and Holy, ready to be used and commanded. Remember that is the finest quality of greatness -- service. I, who could command a universe -- I await the commands of My children. Bring Me into everything.

You will find such Joy as the time goes on in speaking to each other of Me, and together climbing higher. Always humble, meek, and lowly in heart.

Learn this -- no position -- just a servant.

"Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" Philippians 4:4

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/4/21

# The Way to Permanent Faith



Indeed the hour is coming…that you will be scattered… —[John 16:32](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=John+16%3A32)

Jesus was not rebuking the disciples in this passage. Their faith was real, but it was disordered and unfocused, and was not at work in the important realities of life. The disciples were scattered to their own concerns and they had interests apart from Jesus Christ. After we have the perfect relationship with God, through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, our faith must be exercised in the realities of everyday life. We will be scattered, not into service but into the emptiness of our lives where we will see ruin and barrenness, to know what internal death to God’s blessings means. Are we prepared for this? It is certainly not of our own choosing, but God engineers our circumstances to take us there. Until we have been through that experience, our faith is sustained only by feelings and by blessings. But once we get there, no matter where God may place us or what inner emptiness we experience, we can praise God that all is well. That is what is meant by faith being exercised in the realities of life.

“…you…will leave Me alone.” Have we been scattered and have we left Jesus alone by not seeing His providential care for us? Do we not see God at work in our circumstances? Dark times are allowed and come to us through the sovereignty of God. Are we prepared to let God do what He wants with us? Are we prepared to be separated from the outward, evident blessings of God? Until Jesus Christ is truly our Lord, we each have goals of our own which we serve. Our faith is real, but it is not yet permanent. And God is never in a hurry. If we are willing to wait, we will see God pointing out that we have been interested only in His blessings, instead of in God Himself. The sense of God’s blessings is fundamental.

“…be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” ([John 16:33](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+16:33)). Unyielding spiritual fortitude is what we need.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

The sympathy which is reverent with what it cannot understand is worth its weight in gold.  Baffled to Fight Better, 69 L

# CCEL – 4/4/21

Fear not; I am the first and the last.—[REV. 1:17.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Rev.1.html" \l "Rev.1.17)

Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, but ye are come unto mount Sion, . . . to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.—Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.—We have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.—The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One?—Who is God, save the Lord? and who is a rock, save our God?

[Heb. 12:18](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.18),[22-24](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html" \l "Heb.12.22). -[Heb. 12:2](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.12.html#Heb.12.2). -[Heb. 4:15,16](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Heb.4.html" \l "Heb.4.15).[Isa. 44:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.44.html" \l "Isa.44.6). -[Isa. 9:6](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.9.html" \l "Isa.9.6).[Hab. 1:12](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Hab.1.html" \l "Hab.1.12). -[II Sam. 22:32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiSam.22.html" \l "iiSam.22.32).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” [2 Corinthians 5:21](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.iiCor.5.html" \l "iiCor.5.21)

Mourning Christian! why weepest thou? Art thou mourning over thine own corruptions? Look to thy perfect Lord, and remember, thou art complete in him; thou art in God’s sight as perfect as if thou hadst never sinned; nay, more than that, the Lord our Righteousness hath put a divine garment upon thee, so that thou hast more than the righteousness of man—thou hast the righteousness of God. O thou who art mourning by reason of inbred sin and depravity, remember, none of thy sins can condemn thee. Thou hast learned to hate sin; but thou hast learned also to know that sin is not thine—it was laid upon Christ’s head. Thy standing is not in thyself—it is in Christ; thine acceptance is not in thyself, but in thy Lord; thou art as much accepted of God today, with all thy sinfulness, as thou wilt be when thou standest before his throne, free from all corruption. O, I beseech thee, lay hold on this precious thought, perfection in Christ! For thou art “complete in him.” With thy Saviour’s garment on, thou art holy as the Holy one. “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” Christian, let thy heart rejoice, for thou art “accepted in the beloved”—what hast thou to fear? Let thy face ever wear a smile; live near thy Master; live in the suburbs of the Celestial City; for soon, when thy time has come, thou shalt rise up where thy Jesus sits, and reign at his right hand; and all this because the divine Lord “was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

# Word Live – 4/4/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/4/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/4/21

# Jesus Prays for Himself

**Read:** [**John 17:1–5**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a1%e2%80%935)

### **Jesus Prays to Be Glorified**

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

“He has risen! He has risen, indeed!” This is how many believers around the globe will greet one another on this Resurrection Day. But this is more than a greeting, it is a proclamation of what happened to the Savior of the world who surrendered His life for you and me. Because of the resurrection, God the Son is glorified, just as He glorified the Father.

Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. John 17:1

Our text today is the beginning of what is historically known as the High Priestly Prayer. Jesus prayed to His heavenly Father for Himself to be glorified. He is not praying from an egotistical disposition for meaningless praise. Rather, Christ’s prayer is for Him to be glorified so that He could glorify the Father (v. 1). Jesus is clear that His life, death, and resurrection are to make the Father known.

We learn from Jesus’ prayer that His priority was to use every opportunity He had to glorify God the Father. What does it mean to “glorify” someone or something? The word can take on several meanings but at its core, “glorify” means to magnify, celebrate, render excellent, and honor something. It is quite easy to be a witness of glorification today. Oftentimes, we glorify actors and actresses for their performance on the stage. Or we glorify athletes on the field after a play. We glorify our kids and grandkids after an achievement.

However, the glory we give to God ought to be vastly different. Christ glorified His Father by being obedient to His Father’s will. He surrendered His life to the will of His Father and as a result, we are given a new life in Him. We, too, ought to glorify our Heavenly Father by listening and being obedient to His will.

**Apply the Word**

What things or people in your life are you glorifying? Are they receiving more attention and praise than your Heavenly Father? This Easter Sunday, ask yourself how you can bring glory to the Father.

### **Pray with Us**

Father, we glorify you above all! You are the only one worthy of praise. Grant us opportunities to spread the light of your Word throughout the world, bringing glory to your name.

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/4/21

# In the Garden

 **Read:** [**John 20:11–18**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.11%E2%80%9318)

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

16Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

17Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” [John 20:18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.18)

My dad loved to sing the old hymns. One of his favorites was “In the Garden.” A few years back, we sang it at his funeral. The chorus is simple: “And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own, and the joy we share as we tarry there none other has ever known.” That song brought joy to my dad—as it does to me.

Hymn writer C. Austin Miles says he wrote this song in spring 1912 after reading chapter 20 of the gospel of John. “As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary’s life when she knelt before her Lord and cried, ‘Rabboni [Teacher].’ ”

In [John 20](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020), we find Mary Magdalene weeping near Jesus’ empty tomb. There she met a man who asked why she was crying. Thinking it was the gardener, she spoke with the risen Savior—Jesus! Her sorrow turned to joy, and she ran to tell the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” (v. 18).

We too have the assurance that Jesus is risen! He’s now in heaven with the Father, but He hasn’t left us on our own. Believers in Christ have His Spirit inside us, and through Him we have the assurance and joy of knowing He’s with us, and we are “His own.”

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

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How is it comforting to know that you don’t have to do this life on your own? When have you intimately felt Jesus’ presence?

Jesus, I’m so thankful You’re alive and that as Your child You live in me!

To learn more about the resurrection of Jesus, visit [ChristianUniversity.org/resurrection](https://ChristianUniversity.org/resurrection).

#### **Insight**

While there are differences in each of the gospel accounts of the discovery of Jesus’ empty tomb, John’s account ([John 20:11–18](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/John%2020.11%E2%80%9318)) is unique in that Mary’s emotion takes center stage. Mary is crying when she’s introduced in this scene, and her tears are the impetus of the question asked by both the angels and the risen Lord: “Woman, why are you crying?” (vv. 13, 15). To the angels she responds, “They have taken my Lord away” (v. 13). She has lost Him twice—first through death and now through an apparent conspiracy. The angels and Jesus knew why she was crying, but this is where Jesus meets her. When he says her name—“Mary”—she recognizes Him (v. 16). He meets her where she is in her grief and confusion.

# God Calling – 4/4/21

# Divine Efficiency

I am all-powerful and all-knowing and I have all your affairs in My Hands. Divine efficiency as well as Divine power is being brought to bear on them. All miracle-work is not the work of a moment as so often men imagine.

My servant Peter was not changed in a flash from a simple fisherman to a great leader and teacher, but through the very time of faithlessness -- through the very time of denial -- I was yet making him all that he should be. Impetuous spokesman as he always was, ready to lead the other disciples, Peter could never have been the after power he was, had he not learned his weakness. No man can save, unless he understands the sinner.

The Peter who was a mighty force for Me afterwards, who, more than all others, founded My church, was not even first the Peter who said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but the Peter who denied Me. He who had tested My forgiveness in his moment of abject remorse, he could best speak of Me as the Savior.

The Kingdom of Heaven can only be preached by those who have learned to prize the authority of its Kingdom. A many-sided training My Apostles need. Oh! joy. Oh, rejoice. I love you. Not one test too much will I lay on you.

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory." 1 Peter 11:7

# My Utmost for His Highest – 4/5/21

# His Agony and Our Access



Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples…."Stay here and watch with Me." —[Matthew 26:36, 38](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?version=31&search=Matthew+26%3A36%2C+38)

We can never fully comprehend Christ’s agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, but at least we don’t have to misunderstand it. It is the agony of God and man in one Person, coming face to face with sin. We cannot learn about Gethsemane through personal experience. Gethsemane and Calvary represent something totally unique— they are the gateway into life for us.

It was not death on the cross that Jesus agonized over in Gethsemane. In fact, He stated very emphatically that He came with the purpose of dying. His concern here was that He might not get through this struggle as the Son of Man. He was confident of getting through it as the Son of God— Satan could not touch Him there. But Satan’s assault was that our Lord would come through for us on His own solely as the Son of Man. If Jesus had done that, He could not have been our Savior (see [Hebrews 9:11-15](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+9:11-15)). Read the record of His agony in Gethsemane in light of His earlier wilderness temptation— “…the devil…departed from Him until an opportune time” ([Luke 4:13](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+4:13)). In Gethsemane, Satan came back and was overthrown again. Satan’s final assault against our Lord as the Son of Man was in Gethsemane.

The agony in Gethsemane was the agony of the Son of God in fulfilling His destiny as the Savior of the world. The veil is pulled back here to reveal all that it cost Him to make it possible for us to become sons of God. His agony was the basis for the simplicity of our salvation. The Cross of Christ was a triumph for the Son of Man. It was not only a sign that our Lord had triumphed, but that He had triumphed to save the human race. Because of what the Son of Man went through, every human being has been provided with a way of access into the very presence of God.

**Wisdom From Oswald Chambers**

We are not to preach the doing of good things; good deeds are not to be preached, they are to be performed. So Send I You, 1330 L

# CCEL – 4/5/21

I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.—[GEN. 32:26.](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Gen.32.html" \l "Gen.32.26)

Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt.—According to your faith be it unto you.—Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

They drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and [Jesus] made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: . . . he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?—I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight.—My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

[Isa. 27:5](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Isa.27.html" \l "Isa.27.5).[Matt. 15:28](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.15.html" \l "Matt.15.28). -[Matt. 9:29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Matt.9.html" \l "Matt.9.29). -[Jas. 1:6,7](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Jas.1.html" \l "Jas.1.6).[Luke 24:28,29](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.28),[31,32](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.24.html" \l "Luke.24.31). -[Exo. 33:13](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.13). -[Exo. 33:14](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Exod.33.html" \l "Exod.33.14).

“On him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.” [Luke 23:26](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bible/asv.Luke.23.html" \l "Luke.23.26)

We see in Simon’s carrying the cross a picture of the work of the Church throughout all generations; she is the cross-bearer after Jesus. Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ exempts you from sin, but not from sorrow. Remember that, and expect to suffer.

But let us comfort ourselves with this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's, it is not our cross, but Christ’s cross which we carry. When you are molested for your piety; when your religion brings the trial of cruel mockings upon you, then remember it is not your cross, it is Christ's cross; and how delightful is it to carry the cross of our Lord Jesus!

You carry the cross after him. You have blessed company; your path is marked with the footprints of your Lord. The mark of his blood-red shoulder is upon that heavy burden. 'Tis his cross, and he goes before you as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Take up your cross daily, and follow him.

Do not forget, also, that you bear this cross in partnership. It is the opinion of some that Simon only carried one end of the cross, and not the whole of it. That is very possible; Christ may have carried the heavier part, against the transverse beam, and Simon may have borne the lighter end. Certainly it is so with you; you do but carry the light end of the cross, Christ bore the heavier end.

And remember, though Simon had to bear the cross for a very little while, it gave him lasting honour. Even so the cross we carry is only for a little while at most, and then we shall receive the crown, the glory. Surely we should love the cross, and, instead of shrinking from it, count it very dear, when it works out for us “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

# Word Live – 4/5/21

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

# Scripture Union – 4/5/21

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

# Today in the Word – 4/5/21

# Jesus Prays for His Disciples

**Read:** [**John 17:6–19**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319)

### **Jesus Prays for His Disciples**

6“I have revealed you[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#fen-NIV-26766a)] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of[[b](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#fen-NIV-26771b)] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by[[c](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#fen-NIV-26772c)] that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

13“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17Sanctify them by[[d](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#fen-NIV-26777d)] the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [John 17:6](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#en-NIV-26766) Greek your name
2. [John 17:11](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#en-NIV-26771) Or Father, keep them faithful to
3. [John 17:12](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+17%3a6%e2%80%9319#en-NIV-26772) Or kept them faithful to

I do not know how all the components of my smartphone work, but I do know this: if I forget to charge it, and the battery is dead, nothing will work. Jesus knew His disciples would need to work together after He was gone. Their success would depend on whether or not they were constantly plugged into the power source: Jesus. After He prayed for Himself to glorify the Father, He prayed for His disciples.

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. John 17:15

Jesus prayed for their protection against the evil one (v. 15). We are reminded in Jesus’ prayer that a spiritual battle is being fought between Christ’s disciples and the enemy. After Jesus’ departure from this world, He understood that the disciples’ unity would be under attack. Therefore, He prayed that they be kept as one, just as He and the Father were one (v. 11). His prayer reflects His deep desire for His disciples to overcome the principalities of this world by unifying together. Their success in transforming the world depended heavily on the Lord enabling them to work as one.

Then Jesus closed this portion of His prayer by praying for His disciples to be “truly sanctified” (v. 19). The Greek word for “sanctify” can also be translated as “set apart for sacred use” or “make holy.” Christ uses this word three times in the last three sentences emphasizing His plea that they are to be used by God for the mission of the world (v. 18). As Jesus often does, He gives His life as an example of what a sanctified life looks like by going to the cross in fulfillment of His mission to the world (v.19).

**Apply the Word**

Living on mission in the world is a demanding and challenging task. One of the hardest parts is simply identifying the tactics the enemy uses to get us off track. Pray to clearly see your mission field and for God’s protection from the enemy.

### **Pray with Us**

Dear God, you have placed us in this world to fulfill your mission. Guide our every decision to align with your will. Guard us against the attacks, temptations, and lies of the enemy. You are greater!

## BY Chris Rappazini

# Our Daily Bread – 4/5/21

# Anchored in Truth

 **Read:** [**Isaiah 22:15–20**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2022.15%E2%80%9320)

15This is what the Lord, the Lord Almighty, says:

“Go, say to this steward,  
    to Shebna the palace administrator:  
16What are you doing here and who gave you permission  
    to cut out a grave for yourself here,  
hewing your grave on the height  
    and chiseling your resting place in the rock?

17“Beware, the Lord is about to take firm hold of you  
    and hurl you away, you mighty man.  
18He will roll you up tightly like a ball  
    and throw you into a large country.  
There you will die  
    and there the chariots you were so proud of  
    will become a disgrace to your master’s house.  
19I will depose you from your office,  
    and you will be ousted from your position.

20“In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah.

**Read:** [**Isaiah 22:**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2022.15%E2%80%9320)[**22–25**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isaiah%2022.22%E2%80%9325)

22I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 23I will drive him like a peg into a firm place; he will become a seat[[a](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+22%3A15%E2%80%9320+%2C+22%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18076a)] of honor for the house of his father. 24All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.

25“In that day,” declares the Lord Almighty, “the peg driven into the firm place will give way; it will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down.” The Lord has spoken.

#### **Footnotes:**

1. [Isaiah 22:23](https://classic.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+22%3A15%E2%80%9320+%2C+22%E2%80%9325&version=NIV#en-NIV-18076) Or throne

I will drive him like a peg into a firm place. [Isaiah 22:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2022.23)

My family lives in a nearly century-old house with a lot of character, including wonderfully textured plaster walls. A builder cautioned me that with these walls, to hang a picture I’d have to either drill the nail into a wood support or use a plaster anchor for support. Otherwise, I’d risk the picture crashing to the ground, leaving an ugly hole behind.

The prophet Isaiah used the imagery of a nail driven firmly into a wall to describe a minor biblical character named Eliakim. Unlike the corrupt official Shebna ([Isaiah 22:15–19](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2022.15%E2%80%9319)), as well as the people of Israel—who looked to themselves for strength (vv. 8–11)—Eliakim trusted in God. Prophesying Eliakim’s promotion to palace administrator for King Hezekiah, Isaiah wrote that Eliakim would be driven like a “peg into a firm place” (v. 23). Being securely anchored in God’s truth and grace would also allow Eliakim to be a support for his family and his people (vv. 22–24).

Yet Isaiah concluded this prophecy with a sobering reminder that no person can be the ultimate security for friends or family—we all fail (v. 25). The only completely trustworthy anchor for our lives is Jesus ([Psalm 62:5–6](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Ps%2062.5%E2%80%936); [Matthew 7:24](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Matt%207.24)). As we care for others and share their burdens, may we also point them to Him, the anchor who will never fail.

By:  [Lisa M. Samra](https://odb.org/author/lisasamra/)

#### **Reflect & Pray**

How can you stay firmly anchored in God’s truth and grace? In what ways can you support those feeling weighed down by life’s burdens?

Dear Jesus, thank You for being my anchor. As Your child, I know that I’m firmly planted in You.

Read Navigating the Storms of Life at [DiscoverySeries.org/HP061](https://DiscoverySeries.org/HP061).

#### **Insight**

The prophet Isaiah describes how the honorable Eliakim (an official in King Hezekiah’s court) would be like a peg driven into a firm place ([Isaiah 22:23](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Isa%2022.23)). However, that peg “will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down” (v. 25). He would be brought down by his family who took advantage of his high position, bringing about his ruin as the peg gave way under the strain (v. 24). The quick reversal of fortune isn’t unusual in the book of Isaiah, where any word of present deliverance was only temporary, while real future hope lay after the impending judgment that was coming because of Israel’s persistent faithlessness.

# God Calling – 4/5/21

# Heart's Interpreter

Rest in Me. Seek this evening time just to be with Me. Do not feel you have failed if sometimes I ask you only to rest together in My Presence.

I am with you, much with you both, not only at these times, at all times. Feel conscious of My Presence. Earth has no greater joy than that.

I am the heart's great Interpreter. Even souls who are the nearest together have much in their natures that remain a sealed book to each other, and only as I enter and control their lives, do I reveal to each the mysteries of the other.

Each soul is so different -- I alone understand perfectly the language of each, and I can interpret between the two.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Psalm 116:7